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Report to 53rd
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Legislature

Report to 53rd Montana Legislature

SB 252

Habitat Montana

Prepared by
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
January 1993

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Two consultants reports cited within HABITAT MONTANA entitled:

Final Report; Evaluation of Wildlife Habitat Protection Programs,
ECON, Inc., Helena, MT

Public Participation in Wildlife Habitat Programs, Canyon
Consulting, Inc., Missoula

available upon request: Wildlife Division, Montana Department of
Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 East Sixth Avenue,
Helena, MT 59620 (406-444-2612).



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HABITAT MONTANA

Introduction

Montana is recognized nationally for its abundance and variety of wildlife. Montana's bounty is the product of diverse and healthy habitats and a society that values wildlife.

Habitat protection/management is basic to the practice of wildlife management. The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks addresses protection through land use planning, review of activities of other agencies that may affect habitat, partnerships with other agencies and organizations for the purpose of protecting and enhancing habitat, and through the management of department owned lands.

From 1940 through 1986 the department acquired a total of 189,448 acres to be used for wildlife management areas. These were purchased with a combination of hunting license revenue and Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration (P-R) funds, under the department's general authority to acquire land, subject to the consent of the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission and Land Board.

Through the years the land acquisition program of the MDFWP could be described as sporadic depending on availability of funds and opportunities for acquisition from willing sellers. Although a popular program with sportsmen it was not without controversy.

In the 1980's, an effort was initiated, by sportsmen, to increase license fees, earmark the increase for game range acquisition and make a land acquisition a reliable and long term part of the wildlife conservation program. The program was essentially patterned after a similar earlier effort to increase the fishing license fee and earmark the funds for acquiring fishing access sites. The earlier program had been and continues to be very successful.

The result of the effort to earmark funds for wildlife habitat was House Bill 526 of the 50th Legislature. Through changes during the legislative process the bill assumed a broader wildlife habitat protection direction than originally envisioned and the financial base to support it was narrowed, focusing primarily on the nonresident big game hunting license.

HB 526 stipulated that 80 percent of the money earmarked for habitat acquisition be spent on acquisition, and that 20 percent go into an account from which the interest only may be used for operation and maintenance (taken from Final Report: Evaluation of Wildlife Habitat Protection Programs, ECON, Inc., Helena, MT 1992 [ECON]). The legislation thus protected the fund from being diverted to sustain agency operations at the expense of acquiring interest in the habitat itself. Past experience and the growing dependence of government agencies on special funds like those supported by coal tax revenues gave credence to the public concern.

By making the 80/20 split the need to provide operations and maintenance funds for the properties, however, was recognized.

Resistance to HB 526 was present and it elevated arguments about the social and economic impact of land acquisitions. As a result, the 51st Legislature passed House Bill 720 which required a social and economic impact analysis of any acquisition by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission (Commission). The ECON report found, "To date, every social and economic impact analysis for a proposed HB 526 acquisition has indicated substantial positive impacts favoring the acquisition."

The controversy over this issue continued and in 1991 the 52nd legislature again took up the issue and debated two bills. One, SB 13 proposed to make the program a permanent activity and the other SB 252, was a compromise measure calling for an independent comprehensive study of the issue (ECON). SB 252 passed, extending the program through 1996, allocating some of the funds for development and maintenance, and appropriating funds for an independent comprehensive analysis of the program and plan.

Legislative Requirements of SB 252, 52nd Legislature

Senate Bill 252 passed the 52nd Legislature and Section 2 of the act called for a, comprehensive study and a report to the 1993 legislature to be completed by December 1, 1992. Specifically the act called for:

"(1) the department of fish, wildlife and parks shall commission an independent comprehensive study of wildlife habitat acquisition, improvement and development, to be funded in an amount up to \$150,000 from money allocated under 87-1-242(3).

"(2) The study must analyze the department's current wildlife habitat acquisition, improvement, operations, maintenance and development program and develop a comprehensive plan for a permanent wildlife habitat acquisition, improvement, operations, maintenance, development and land management program, including the use of conservation easements, leases and fee title acquisition. The study must also include a comprehensive and detailed accounting of expenditures authorized by 87-1-242(4). The department shall ensure participation by the public, including landowners and sportsmen, in the development of the comprehensive plan."

This report responds to these legislative directives. The specific items to be addressed are contained in paragraph (2) of Section 2 of the act. They are in turn broken down into three components:

-an analysis of the current program,

- a comprehensive plan for a permanent program, and
- an accounting of expenditures authorized by 87-1-242(4).

The first two items above were further directed to address specific areas of legislative concern. Public involvement in the development of the comprehensive plan is mandated.

Two consultants were contracted to work on the project only one, ECON, Inc., worked under contract requirements that allowed for independent analysis by virtue of language in the "purposes" and "duties" sections of their contract. The second contractor, Canyon Consulting, worked under a contract with "duties" that established a collaborative approach with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The Canyon contract called for "...build(ing) a public constituency for the department's wildlife habitat program,...."

This report responds to the legislative requests of SB 252 and it initiates the planning process called for in that legislation. The consultant reports are used to aid in the design of this habitat conservation strategy.

Administrative Review

The following is a summary of the administrative review that was prepared by ECON Inc. The department and commission have accepted the report, as having fulfilled the contract between the department and ECON Inc. However, the report is the work of the consultant and it stands on its own merits.

ECON Inc. reviewed the statutes, regulations, policies, department documents and other literature pertinent to the protection of wildlife habitats. They interviewed department personnel who have responsibilities for administration and implementation of the habitat programs. They also informally discussed habitat protection with personnel from fish and wildlife agencies in other western states who are responsible for similar programs in their respective agencies.

The principle findings of ECON's report were:

1. *Habitat protection has been and continues to be fundamental to the mission of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.*
2. *Implementation of HB 526 has been consistent with the requirements defined by the statute and ARM rules.*
3. *Although compliance isn't a problem, there are important management concerns that should be resolved to make the habitat programs more effective and efficient.*

- a. *Direction for the habitat program is not well defined and not mutually understood by the department, commission and our constituents. Literally interpreted, HB 526 defined a "proactive, wildlife habitat program". To date, the program has been an "opportunistic, big game habitat program".*
- b. *Although HB 526 indicated a priority for leases and conservation easements, most projects have been purchases in fee.*
- c. *The department is not able to recover its direct costs for HB 526 administration. Revenue sources for this program must be used exclusively by the commission to secure, develop and maintain habitat. Direct costs for administration are not known because there is no budget for these activities.*
- d. *The department is able to respond as opportunities arise. The department is not well organized to develop and implement a proactive program.*
- e. *HB 526 and the upland game bird habitat enhancement program are distinct because they are authorized by different statutes and they have different funding sources. However, the program purposes are similar.*

ECON noted that several changes could make the department's habitat programs more effective and efficient. To that purpose, the consultant recommended:

1. *The department should develop a proactive habitat plan and a plan that puts greater emphasis on projects that can be accomplished with leases and easements.*
2. *Authority and revenues for the upland game bird habitat program and HB 526 should be combined.*
3. *Development, implementation and management of a habitat plan will require better definition of the responsibilities of selected staff and regional personnel and improved coordination between the habitat program and the department's land unit.*
4. *A more comprehensive habitat plan also will require a stronger commitment to data management. The department needs to acquire and manage information in order to identify priority projects. It needs similar information management capability in order to develop and implement site-specific habitat management plans.*
5. *Collectively, these changes may require different accounting procedures so that the department can budget for program administration. Legislative changes are required to allow the department to recover costs.*

ECON's report did not address the adequacy of program revenues. In discussions with the project coordinator, the consultant suggested

that this issue could not be reasonably evaluated until all of the other recommended changes were made and the department had experience with managing the modified program.

Public Involvement

The following is a summary of the public involvement phase of the evaluation, prepared for the department by Canyon Consulting. The department and commission have accepted the report, as having fulfilled the contract between the department and Canyon Consulting. However, the report, Public Participation in Wildlife Habitat Programs, Canyon Consulting, Inc., Missoula, MT 1992 (Canyon) is the work of the consultant and it stands on its own merits.

Canyon Consulting employed a market research approach to determine the people who are interested in and affected by the department's habitat program. The consultant also defined the values which these people share and the services that they expect the department and the commission to deliver in a habitat program. The consultant assumed that the department could define a scientifically defensible habitat program to deliver that service and our constituents then would accept the program.

Twenty one department personnel, from various work units and disciplines, participated in the internal "Service Team". They developed hypotheses about values important to people who have a stake in the protection of wildlife habitat. These hypotheses then were qualitatively tested through a series of focus group meetings.

Meetings were held in each regional headquarters city. Each meeting was attended by from 17 to 25 people, specifically selected to represent a variety of interests and perspectives. A ninth meeting was scheduled in Helena for designated representatives of established organizations that have a continuing interest in habitat protection.

The service team used the input from the focus groups to revise the initial predictions and assist the consultant with the development of a quantitative survey. Mailing lists were requested from the same organizations that were invited to the ninth focus group. Representative samples were drawn from these lists and the survey was mailed to about 3,900 Montanans. Survey results were tabulated and provided to the department. The survey results will allow the department to evaluate various habitat initiatives and their constituency support.

Canyon Consulting used the survey to describe the profiles of various interests who are affected by the department's habitat programs. The consultant also was able to describe values that are important and common to most Montanans, irrespective of their interest in the habitat programs. Canyon Consulting's

recommendations are designed so that the department and the commission can serve those common values through habitat protection.

Canyon's report suggests that the public will support our habitat programs if we satisfy several basic criteria:

1. *The department must meet the needs that the public perceives as important, even when the needs of the department's various publics differ.*
2. *The department must respond to those needs with services that cannot be obtained elsewhere.*
3. *The department must meet the highest standards of quality for wildlife stewardship and public service.*
4. *The public must perceive our service as useful, unique and high quality.*
5. *In delivering public service, we have a responsibility to treat everyone equitably.*

Public support for our habitat program also is contingent on the department's ability to manage a program that serves shared public values. People expect a habitat program to:

1. *Conserve Montana's land, water and wildlife resources as a whole, productive system.*
2. *Protect that system against emerging threats so it remains intact for future generations.*
3. *Act with equitable regard for the interests of all stakeholders and without unduly favoring any.*

To exercise leadership, the department and commission must clarify the goals for habitat. These goals and our commitment to responsiveness must be linked with a formal process for identifying habitat sites and planning and executing conservation strategies for those sites.

To effectively deliver public service through a habitat program the department must exhibit the following qualities:

1. *Decision-making procedures that include affected publics.*
2. *The capacity to hear the public's expressed needs.*
3. *Skill in communicating department decisions to the affected publics.*

4. *A decentralized structure, to communicate with the public and respond to local needs.*
5. *Unity, to use resources efficiently, set statewide goals and priorities, and respond to surprises without confusion or dissent.*

To be both decentralized and unified, the agency's culture must exhibit these qualities:

1. *Alignment of all staff behind clear, explicit and shared goals;*
2. *Department-wide commitment to achieving professional stewardship goals by (not despite) meeting the needs of affected publics;*
3. *Department in which people trust each other and know what other people will do before they do it;*
4. *Excellent communication and cooperation among department units, with clear objectives and accountability for tasks that involve people from more than one unit.*

Canyon Consulting listed seven principles which are the foundation for their recommendations:

Principle 1: To exercise leadership with the public, the department must clarify its goals for habitat. Everyone in the department should know what the goals are, and the goals must be expressed in a way that lets the public understand them.

Principle 2: The department will earn public support to the extent people perceive it to be serving them personally. That will require multiple systems for listening and responding to the public, and it will require everyone in the department have appropriate incentives, information and skills for communication and human relations.

Principle 3: The third leg in earning public support (along with clarifying goals and emphasizing communication and responsiveness) must be to formalize processes for identifying habitat sites and planning and executing conservation strategies for those sites.

Principle 4: Montana needs a reliable, business-like assessment of the resources needed to fill the gaps in its habitat system and the most efficient way to deploy those resources. Then the Legislature, commission and Department would have a solid basis for setting

administrative budget policy. once policy is set, the department needs some flexibility to move funds to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities and meet unforeseen needs.

Principle 5: Effective internal coordination is crucial to effective public participation. To begin with, it is crucial to an effective program of securing leases and easements, which requires the contribution of many units. It also is crucial to accurate and timely responses to public stimuli.

Principle 6: Montana needs an integrated, statewide approach to habitat conservation and enhancement. The scope and diversity of jurisdictions and ownerships of Montana habitat requires cooperation among agencies, organizations and landowners.

Principle 7: Continuity of purpose is possible if everyone in the program is working for the same long-term goals and enlists public support for those goals through superior service.

Collectively, the recommendations are designed so that the department and the commission, through habitat protection, can serve the values which are common to all of our publics:

1. The department and commission should develop a concise statement of mission, long-range goals, and essential services for their habitat programs. The consultant identified the following mission as acceptable to our publics, consistent with our mission, and supportable with the best available scientific judgement: *To serve all users and supporters of Montana's habitat by conserving Montana's habitat systems and passing them intact to future generations.*
2. The department and commission should implement this mission through a statewide habitat system with three components, each with a corresponding system goal.

System Goal 1: *To conserve Montana's wildlife populations and natural communities with management that keeps them intact and viable for future generations, in numbers that sustain or enhance current recreational opportunities, and with a geographic distribution that represents their historic locations and ranges.*

This system goal would commit us to manage wildlife habitats for healthy game populations, conservation of biological diversity and, wherever practical, through cooperation with private land owners and other land management agencies.

System Goal 2: To conserve Montana's land and water resources in adequate quantity and quality to sustain the ecological systems required in Goal 1.

This system goal recognizes that conservation of fundamental resources is an essential prerequisite of habitat management.

System Goal 3: To have habitat management systems that foster economic and cultural values and activities that rely on habitat, are important to Montana's quality of life, and are compatible with the conservation of soil, water, and biological populations and communities.

This system goal recognizes that the department and commission have responsibilities in addition to the protection of habitat. We can serve people without compromising our responsibilities for habitat.

3. The department and commission should develop a habitat program that delivers the following services as a package in order to gain public support and make progress toward the mission:
 - a. *Conserving wildlife populations, conserving land and water;*
 - b. *Providing hunting and fishing opportunities;*
 - c. *Conserving habitat for a diversity of plants and animals and managing habitat to benefit non-game species;*
 - d. *Providing incentives for habitat conservation on private land;*
 - e. *Providing non-hunting recreation;*
 - f. *Protecting open space and scenic areas through habitat protection.*
 - g. *Promoting habitat enhancing agriculture.*

4. The department and the commission should establish management policies for habitat programs that assure continuity while anticipating and responding to new problems and opportunities.

This broad recommendation is supported with several additional recommendations which each contain specific recommendations:

- a. *The department should provide experienced staff to work with the commission in a policy review process.*
- b. *The department should develop a state system plan, based on an objective analysis of needs.*

- c. *The department should undertake habitat conservation and enhancement as part of a larger statewide system*
- d. *The department and commission should regularly and objectively measure progress in the habitat programs. The Department should set measurable objectives and then monitor results against those objectives.*
- e. *The department should emphasize partnerships in all its habitat conservation work - - with other state agencies, agencies of other jurisdictions, private land owners and nonprofit organizations.*
- f. *To avoid misunderstandings, wasted effort and backlash, the Department should regard partnerships as contractual arrangements. It should not enter partnerships unless they meet the following criteria. (listed 10.1 - 10.7, page 82 Canyon).*
- g. *Econ (p.57) recommended eliminating the sunset provision for HB 526. We recommend that either it be eliminated or its term be extended to at least ten years.*
- h. *The department should establish multiple, routine procedures for communicating with and listening to the habitat programs' publics.*

The consultants also encourage the department and commission to view our activities for habitat protection as a part of a larger state-wide habitat system, implemented in a manner that fosters coordination and cooperation with other agencies and private landowners.

- 5. The department should design and manage internal processes so as to deliver the strategic services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This broad recommendation also is supported with several specific recommendations that would encourage efficiency and synergy among the various work units that have

responsibilities for habitat and process management that promotes the efficient delivery of public service.

6. The department should establish a quality assurance program. The purpose of this program is to continue to provide services that the public perceives as useful, high quality and unique by correcting problems before they happen.

ACCOUNTING OF EXPENDITURES

An accounting of expenditures authorized by 87-1-242(4) is provided as an appendix to this report. A more detailed discussion is provided in the department's report to the legislature on HB 526.

DEPARTMENT AND COMMISSION RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTANTS REPORTS

Although the two evaluations were conducted independently of each other and each viewed the wildlife habitat programs from different perspectives, the department and commission believe there is considerable congruity in the recommendations.

However, we also recognize that the scope of change implied by the recommendations in their entirety is substantial and beyond our ability to accomplish during a short period of time.

The department and commission propose several specific actions and believe that they are consistent with and supported by both consultant reports.

Administrative Recommendations

Accomplishing many of the specific recommendations from both consultants' reports and most of the philosophy that supports those recommendations will require administrative actions. The department and commission commit to a timely implementation of the following specific administrative actions and to take these actions in a manner that is consistent with the spirit of both reports.

1. The department and commission accept Canyon Consulting's analysis of the public whom we serve and commit to serve everyone equitably.

2. The commission will adopt a package of broad policy statements that guide administration and management of the habitat program. The process will include a 60-day minimum public comment period on draft policies prior to final adoption and will be completed by December 31, 1993. The formal rule making process will be used to establish the habitat policy.

The draft policy statements will present the following mission:

Our mission is to serve all users and supporters of Montana's habitat by conserving Montana's habitat systems and passing them intact to future generations.

The department and commission will implement this mission through a statewide habitat system defined by three components, each with a corresponding system goal.

Conservation of Montana's wildlife populations and natural communities with management that keeps them intact and viable for future generations, in numbers that sustain or enhance current recreational opportunities, and with a geographic distribution that

represents their historic locations and ranges.

Conservation of Montana's land and water resources in adequate quantity and quality to sustain ecological systems.

Implementation of habitat management systems which minimize conflicts with traditional agricultural, economic and cultural values and activities that rely on habitat, are important to Montana's quality of life, and are compatible with the conservation of soil, water, and biological populations and communities.

The commission policy should also recognize that the habitat program needs to provide the following services or outputs: conserving wildlife, conserving land and water, providing hunting and fishing opportunities, conserving habitat for a diversity of plants and animals, providing incentives for habitat conservation on private land, providing nonhunting recreation protecting open space and scenic areas through habitat protection, promoting habitat friendly agriculture and managing wildlife habitat for nongame species.

3. The department and commission agree that the amended rules for the habitat program and the above policies should guide development of a statewide wildlife habitat plan. The commission will direct the department to complete a comprehensive statewide habitat plan. The plan will be developed according to the following format:

- a. The department will develop draft criteria for identifying "important habitats that are seriously threatened." The commission will adopt these criteria through a process that includes public review and comment.
- b. Within each administrative region, the department will identify habitat protection priorities. Habitat needs will be compiled by region into a consolidated plan.
- c. The department, in consultation with other agencies and organizations, will develop criteria to guide development of site-specific management plans. These criteria will be applicable to the management of lands in which the department acquires an interest and in cooperative habitat projects on other ownerships.

- d. The department will develop monitoring and evaluation strategies, consistent with the program's intent.
- e. In accordance with the provisions of HB 526, the commission encourages the use of leases and conservation easements with the use of fee title as the last alternative. The department will manage the habitat protection program according to good business procedures and the exercise of good judgement in making recommendations to the commission between fee and less than fee acquisition. Our intent is to make decisions that balance considerations for the practical use of capital and effective use of available management funds. In evaluating alternatives the department and commission will favor actions that produce the greatest benefit for the investment over the long term.
- f. The commission will adopt a comprehensive statewide habitat plan that incorporates each of the above elements prior to October, 1994. The process for approval will include a 60-day minimum public comment period on a draft plan.

The upland game bird program authorizes the department to acquire interests in land through leases and conservation easements. Projects of this type will be managed and approved according to the commission's rules, policies and procedures for the statewide habitat plan.

The program also authorizes the department to accomplish upland game bird habitat enhancement on private lands through a variety of procedures and cooperative arrangements. These projects typically involve comparatively small expenditures. These activities have been the major thrust of the program and constitute over 95% of the program expenditures thus far. The department will complete a thorough programmatic review, consistent with the Montana Environmental Policy Act, of these activities.

4. The department and commission agree that, in some situations, the mission of the habitat program may be more effectively and efficiently accomplished through the actions of other parties. The department will appoint an internal team to develop and manage procedures that will facilitate the accomplishment of the habitat program through cooperation with other agencies.

5. The department and commission agree that good administrative policy requires accurate project accounting. The department will establish procedures to account for habitat program expenditures through the State Budget and Accounting System (SBAS). In addition to project expenditures for operation and maintenance activities,

for which accounting reports are currently available, the department will account for the various administrative and management costs associated with implementation of the recommendations in this report.

6. The department and commission agree that good data management procedures, including the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, are appropriate for efficient administration of the wildlife habitat program. However, we recognize that this technology is expensive to purchase and time consuming to implement. The department will pursue the most efficient and cost effective program for implementing a data management system.

Regulatory Recommendations

Carrying out legislative directions is the responsibility of the MDFWP and the Commission. Powers and authorities of the Commission relative to habitat are:

"...to set policies and regulations for the protection, preservation, and propagation of fish and wildlife...to establish the rules for the use of lands owned or controlled by the department; to approve all acquisitions or transfers by the department of interests in land or water... The Commission has additional specific authority to adopt rules for the use of lands owned or controlled by the department...and to adopt rules as provided by statute for the acquisition of wildlife habitat (HB 526)." Taken from Public Participation In Wildlife Habitat Programs, Canyon Consulting Inc., Missoula, Montana September 1992 (Canyon).

It is this rule-making process that provides the opportunity for meaningful public participation in the definition of policies that will guide the wildlife habitat program.

The department and commission recognize that effective management of policies for the wildlife habitat program also may require amendments to the rules for implementing the Montana Environmental Policy Act. However, we also believe that those amendments should be the result of a broader evaluation of our commitment to compliance with MEPA. Accordingly, no draft amendments are proposed at this time, however, the commission commits to amending the rules to implement the habitat programs as appropriate.

Summary

A number of the recommendations made by the consultants have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Both recognized the need to reconsider the sunset provision of the habitat statute. The development of the comprehensive plan as outlined will provide a sound basis for reconsidering the sunset

provision. A ten year time frame for reconsideration of the sunset provision would allow ample time to demonstrate the effectiveness of a program implemented according to the program guidelines described in this document.

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APPENDIX A

Senate Bill 252 required "study must include a comprehensive and detailed accounting of expenditures authorized by 87-1-242 (4):"

(4) (a) Until March 1, 1991, 20% of the money allocated by this section must be credited to the account created by 87-1-601(5) for use in the manner prescribed therein for the development and maintenance of real property used for wildlife habitat.

(b) On and after March 1, 1991, 20% of the money allocated by this section must be used as follows:

(i) up to 50% a year may be used for development and maintenance of real property used for wildlife habitat; and

(ii) the remainder and any money not allocated for development and maintenance under subsection (4)(b)(i) by the end of each odd-numbered fiscal year must be credited to the account created by 87-1-601(5) for use in the manner prescribed therein for the development and maintenance of real property used for wildlife habitat. *(Terminates March 1, 1996 - sec. 3, Ch. 319, L. 1991.)*

This report details the appropriated authority, expenditures and balances of the accounts authorized under this statute. The accounting figures reflect expenditures as of 11-30-92. A number of projects are underway and expenditures will continue to accrue and will be reflected on SBAS.

Operations Budget

WILDLIFE

(HB 2 91 Legislature)

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Balance</u>
A. Appropriation 23814; FY93	\$68,000	11,105	56,895
Appropriation 22814; FY92	68,000	66,742	1,258

Projects funded under this appropriation are directed at day to day maintenance activities such as fence maintenance, small weed control contracts, sign replacement, etc. Expenditures are for supplies and materials, and repair and maintenance associated with the WMAs. These expenditures are generally of a smaller amount reflecting unanticipated needs.

B. Biennial Appropriation 22820	508,026	251,769	256,257
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S.B.252 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS. STATUS REPORT APPROPRIATION 22820

1. BEARTOOTH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA SIGNING PROJECT: \$10,000 allocated.

Proper signing of the wma informs hunters and other recreationists of information, travel plans and regulations, as well as, educate the public as to the areas value to the wildlife species that live there. This project is nearly completed. \$7,332 has been expended.

2. SUN RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA ROAD PROJECT: \$23,066.

Water run-off in the spring of 1991 caused many roads, culverts and one bridge to be washed out, which resulted in much of the wma to be inaccessible to the public. This project is to restore public access and proper management of the wma. This project is completed.

3. FREEZOUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA VISITOR TOUR ROUTE ROAD REPAIR: \$35,000 allocated

This project coincides with the current demand for enhanced public recreation, including access for hunting, viewing and outdoor recreation. Freezout attracts a spectacular diversity and large numbers of wildlife. This project is in the design phase and includes handicapped accessibility features.

4. ROBB/LEDFORD WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA MAINTENANCE: \$60,000 allocated

Robb/Ledford WMA was purchased the summer of 1988. This project includes initial maintenance to make the area more useable. Work is to include removing old fence; repairing/replacing water lines for a rest rotation grazing system (in progress); installing cattleguards (in progress); and building cattle enclosure as part of the vegetation monitoring. The final grazing system is on hold pending a land exchange. \$13,747 has been expended to date.

5. MOUNT HAGGIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA WEED CONTROL: \$8,416.73

This project is to contain, and reduce where possible, noxious weeds on the wma. This project is completed.

6. BLACKFOOT-CLEARWATER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA WEED CONTROL: \$20,046.

This project is to contain the spread of knapweed, and reduce where possible. 1,200 acres of rangeland and 250 acres of meadow land to be treated. This project is completed.

7. JUDITH RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA RESEEDED AREA FERTILIZATION PROJECT: \$8,531.70

The reseeded fields contribute a total of 750 acres to the habitat

base provided by the wma for elk forage during winter and spring period. Fertilization of the reseeded fields will increase needed forage and reduce elk use of adjacent private lands. This project is completed.

8. MILK RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA DIKE REPAIR: \$35,000 allocated.

This maintenance project is to raise the main dike; replace a portion of the dike; and replace the spillway. It was necessary for a related Ducks Unlimited project to be completed first. Project is in progress.

9. ELK ISLAND/SEVEN SISTERS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA: \$17,500 allocated.

Project lands will be managed using a rest rotation grazing system. Capital improvements for the grazing system includes cattleguards and fencing. This project is nearly complete with an expenditure of \$4,858.50.

10. THREEMILE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA MAINTENANCE AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT: \$115,500 allocated

The Threemile is a multiphase project. Phase I: spray 750 acres of knapweed. Completed at cost of \$10,650. Phase II: 12 miles of boundary fence replacement. Approximately half completed at cost of \$47,147. Phase III: seven miles of road repair. Phase IV: one mile of internal fence for grazing and a well pump. (not started) Phase V: new entrance sign. Will be last item completed.

11. ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEYS ON THE SUN RIVER/EAR MTN./BLACKLEAF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS: \$20,000 allocated.

Archaeological surveys are required before ground disturbing activities can take place. This project will enable FWP to account for the cultural resources on these wma's and allow projects to proceed in a timely manner. The Blackleaf wma has been surveyed, but report not yet completed. \$1,000 has been expended. Remaining surveys in progress.

12. REGION FOUR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS SIGNING PROJECT: \$10,000 allocated.

Information, travel plans, and regulations are important aspects of WMA management. Signs also help interpret the uses of the area and the variety of wildlife and habitats that exist because of the wildlife management areas. This project is partially completed with an expenditure of \$6,377.

13. BLACKLEAF AND EAR MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS ROAD GRADING: \$5,000.

Maintenance of internal roads on two wma's (not started).

14. FRESNO WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA GRAZING MANAGEMENT FENCE:
\$16,000 allocated.

This project is to build 3.0 miles of internal fence for a rest rotation grazing system. The project began construction in summer of 1992, to be completed in 1993. Expenditure to date is \$4,191.00.

15. JUDITH RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA CONIFER ENCROACHMENT
JOINT PROJECT: \$3,000.

FWP signed agreement with U.S. Forest Service for tree removal from 200 acres of the wma where conifer encroachment was occurring. Removal will maintain forage for elk on the wma. Project completed.

16. REGION ONE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS WEED CONTROL: \$3,000 allocated.

This project will treat approximately 101 acres on the Kootenai and Mt. Silcox WMA's to control spotted knapweed. This project is partially complete with the expenditure of \$815.06.

17. Equipment purchase of \$25,895 for a tractor for the Ninepipes WMA.

C. Biennial Appropriation 22296	24,000	16,503	7,496
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Field Services: This appropriation is for engineering services associated with development and maintenance of real property used for wildlife habitat.

(HB 5 91 Legislature)

Capital Program

D. Appropriation 21977	304,000	47,616	256,384
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The following projects have been submitted to A and E and are in progress.

	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Balance</u>
B/C Road and Fence	\$ 4,055.76	\$ 19,944.24
Mt. Haggin/Fleecer Roads	- 0 -	20,000.00
Isaac Homestead	- 0 -	23,500.00
Milk River Fence	11,087.32	13,912.68
Ninepipe Handicap	18,990.00	31,010.00
Bear Creek Roads	84.00	14,916.00
Brewer Fence	- 0 -	100,000.00
Dome Mountain Fence	<u>13,398.36</u>	<u>601.64</u>
	\$47,615.44	\$223,884.56

unobligated	\$32,500.00
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